

FRONTIENNAE

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN FOLK LORE

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"The purpose of the American Square-Dance Group is to make available those rich stores of native dance, music, drama and general Americana which together comprise American folk culture; to conduct such activities without regard for race, creed, color or social position; to cooperate with those who hold similar views."

Constitution of the A S D G.

PROMENADE

STAFF

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Wonder-Wonderings

That is about the best title I can think of for my meanderings. It is taken from that wonderful religious folk song "I Wonder As I Wander" collected by John J. Niles and published in his "Songs of the Hill-Folk". He also recorded it in the Victor album "Early American Ballads".

Yes, I've been wondering, also wandering, a lot since I returned to civilian life. The growing popularity of the folk song quite intrigues me, and I wonder what is back of it? Is it the personalities of the singers, or the songs themselves?

Recently, in a magazine of nation-wide circulation, I chanced to read "a letter from the publisher" in which he described the system used, in that magazine, to prevent errors from creeping into the stories and articles. At least six editors to work on each article, and, besides, a complete staff of research editors to check on every detail. And still, says the publisher, "boners" do manage to slip in. Well--I guess Promenade isn't so bad, considering the antics we have to go through to publish it.

Incidentally, in this issue we are starting a new system of farming out the work to various mem-

bers of the group. Articles written in long-hand are mailed to a member who has a typewriter, to be typed and lined up. Then the typed papers come winging home to me for sketches. Finally, the stencils are taken down to be "run-off" on the mimeograph at the office of Common Ground. After printing, the pages are "thumbed through", assembled, stapled--the envelopes addressed, the issues mailed. All this because we don't have a central headquarters for our group. I wonder when there'll be available space in this too-crowded city for office, studios and homes.

This first peace time Christmas will serve, I think, as a testing of our nation's memory, and stability. Will we go all out, in our celebrations this year, or will we remember that the peace is not yet won--will we remember the why and wherefore of the misery that the world has known these last long years? I wonder!

And now, to those who have kept the home fronts going, to those returned to resume their futures--to those still in service, and to our Allies all over the world.....

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Margot

Bad Mothers In Ballads

by
G. Saletan and A. Liss

The mothers in the ballads of by gone days just don't seem to "live up to the high standards we modern off-spring have come to expect of them.

There are innumerable examples, in these chronicles of life in the good old days, of mothers no nice, self-respecting child would ever choose.

Take, for example, the mothers who are jealous of the youth and good looks of their children, and who will not allow them to enjoy life to its fullest extent. Maybe it's an unconscious desire to manage their children's lives which makes these women behave in a manner most unpleasant for their offspring. There is a mother like that in "Lolly-Toodum", who not only ridicules her daughter's ambition to marry, but who even embarrasses the poor girl by screaming at her to come and wash the dishes! Loud enough for the neighbors to hear! Of course, the maiden was only 14 years old, but children matured early in those days, we're told.

Josef Marais sings a song from the African Veld which tells a similar story. In "Here Am I" the mother not only locks her daughter in her room, but actually chases the would-be suitor with a "hefty stick". Leadbelly's well-beloved lament "Irene" tells much the same story.*



There are many versions of the ancient ballad "The Hangsman's Tree" and Reed Smith gives a fine history of this song in his "American Anthology of Old-World Ballads". In this time-honored story

a young girl stands at the gallows tree, condemned to death for "lack of money to pay a fine". The girl watches, tearfully and prayerfully, as each member of her family arrives to view, with relish no doubt, the execution. Even the mother, the hard-hearted old woman, refuses to lend the distressed maiden the paltry sum!! It probably seemed a huge amount to the family, but no doubt the victim felt differently about it. What a cruel mother, who could cheerfully deny aid to her daughter, and even ride "many a mile" for the questionable pleasure of watching her child "hanging from the gallows tree". Some versions claim that the victim in the song was a boy, but that does not alter the fact that the mother was most inhuman.



Which brings us to "The Cruel Mother", whose little children return to her as ghosts and accuse her (and rightly so) of murdering them. The twins stand there, in ghastly splendor, and, looking the repentant mother squarely in the face, sing "you took a knife both sharp and keen and pierced it through our little heart...you dug a grave both wide and deep....and wrapped us in a winding sheet".



Reed Smith again has a good explanation for this cowardly act. This ballad came to us through the early English settlers, but there is also a Danish version, which tells the entire bloody story.

Some songs tell of unfaithful wives, who naturally are not the best mothers in the world. Remember the boy's mother in "Hullabaloo Delay" who, one fine morning ran off with Shallow Brown, deserting her husband and son? One thing can be said in favor of the run-away mother in "The House Carpenter". After some days at sea with her lover, she benched her

*Editor's note: come now, boys, be reasonable. The mother was right in this case, you must admit!

(continued on next page)

"poor little babe that I never will see any more." But there is no excuse whatever for the mother in "Faggle Taggle Gypsies" who ran away from her home, her husband, and her children, in order to live out in the "cold" with the black-jack gypsies, oh!

There are many examples of unworthy and undesirable mothers in folk lore, but to list them all would take up too much space. However, it is no surprise to us that so many children left home, in the old days. Maybe they are still running away from unsympathetic parents, for all we know.

IN ANSWER TO AN INQUIRY

One of our subscribers wrote in recently, asking for information concerning our own and other folk groups in this vicinity. Eventually we hope to publish such a list, but in the meantime, let us suggest the Square and Folk Dance Directory, published by Rod La Farge at 115 Cliff St., Haledon Paterson 2, New Jersey.

ABOUT THE A S D G

The American Square Dance Group, the first of its kind in New York, was founded thirteen years ago by Margot Mayo, then a student at the Dalcroze School of Music.

Membership in the group entitles the member to certain discounts in subscription rates to Promenade, in admissions to "open houses" and enables the member to attend the group membership rehearsals and group parties such as the one described in Notes of Interest. Membership dues are \$2.00 yearly.

Membership rehearsals are held each Friday evening at 8:30, at 1657 B'way. At these rehearsals the members practice and learn all types of American folk dances, as well as some foreign dances. They also learn American folk songs. Participation dues are \$5.00 yearly.

"Open house" classes are held on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month at 1657 B'way, begin-

ning at 8:30. American and foreign folk dances are taught to those who may not have the time to devote to weekly meetings. "Open houses" are open to all who wish to learn the dances, and the fees are 75¢ an evening.

RADIO FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL

There is at least one radio station in New York realizing the value of folk music. WNEW is offering a series of folk music programs on Sunday afternoons at 4 o'clock.

Outstanding folk singers appear, sing and play and teach the songs to the audience. It sounds like a lot of fun, and we are going to write for tickets. That's all you have to do to join in the audience participation and learn some new songs or sing your favorite old-time ballads with such popular artists as Josef Marais, Edith Allaire and others to be announced.

FOLK DANCE COURSE

A new course in authentic folk dances will be presented at the City Center in New York, beginning on Saturday evening, Jan. 19th. The course will include nationality dances, taught by leaders of ethnics under the leadership of well known nationality teachers. This is the first course of its kind since the late-lamented Folk Festival Council courses at the New School.

The members of the groups will wear the authentic national costumes of their first homelands, and the dances and songs will be taught with the attention to detail that comes from genuine love, knowledge of and respect for folk lore.

The course will consist of eight weekly sessions on consecutive Saturday nights, beginning Jan. 19 and ending on March 9th with a review of all the dances and songs taught during the course. The fee is \$10 for the course and enrollment may be made by writing to the Sec., Folk Dance Forum, City Center, 130 West 56th St., New York.

Straight Across The Hall

This play party game was collected by Dolly Lentz, from a square dance caller and enthusiast named Fred Colby, of Nashville, Tenn.

Since play party games are sung, and no instrumental accompaniment is used, as a general rule, we are giving only the melody-line here.

Formation: A circle with not more than six couples in a set.

Song Words:

- 1) Straight across the hall to the opposite lady
- 2) Swing her by the right hand
- 3) Swing your partner by the left
and promenade the girl behind you.
Oh that girl, that pretty little girl,
That girl I left behind me
The more I drink, the less I think
Of the girl I left behind me.

Description: Active couples are any two directly across the set from each other, and so designated by a leader.

- 1) Active couples skip toward each other
- 2) Active gents turn their opposite ladies by joining right hands with them and turning once around.
- 3) All the gents turn their partners with a left-hand turn and all the gents take the ladies behind them as their new partners. All promenade around the set once and stop in the gents' original positions. The promenade position is the usual one, partners with right hands joined, and left hands joined, left arms beneath other right arms. The promenade is in the counterclockwise direction.

The active gents remain active and start the game again. They continue to be active until each gent has his original partner back again. Then the next two gents to the right of the original active gents become active and the game continues until each gent in the circle has been active.





CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Children's Books



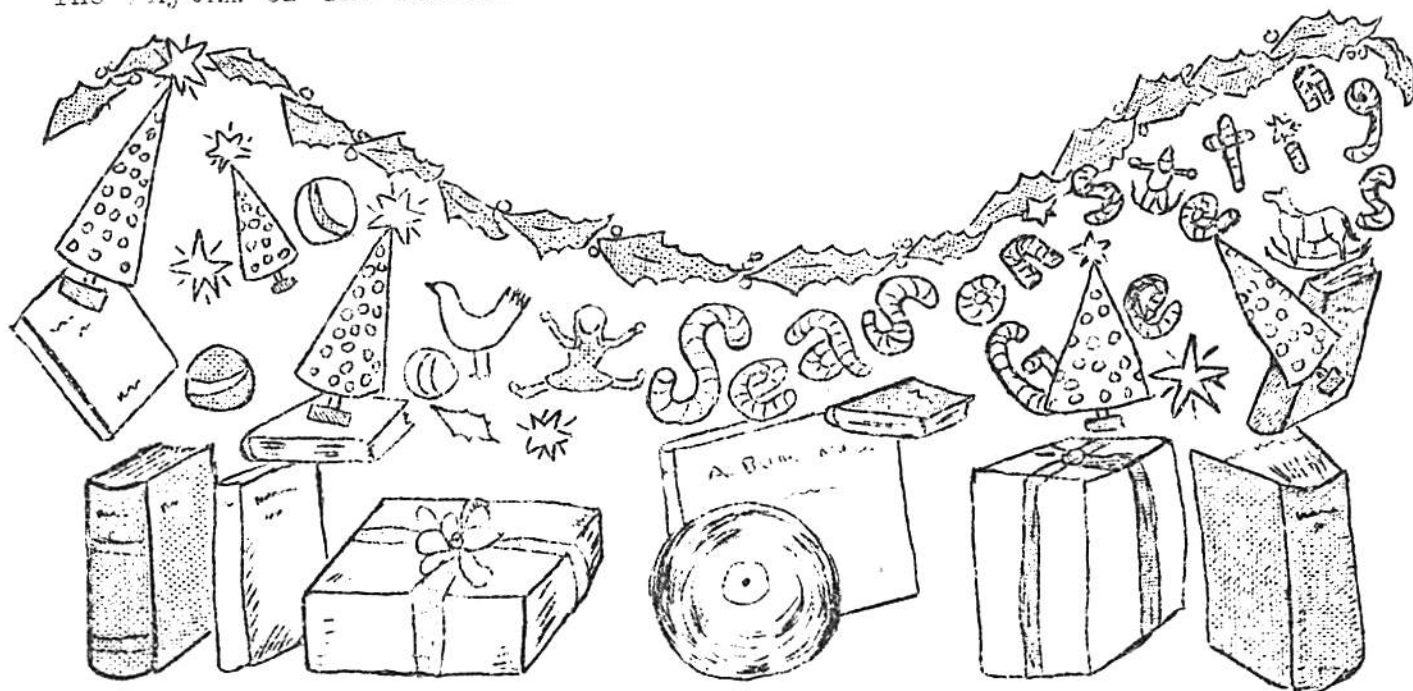
John Henry and The Double Jointed Steam Drill	by Shapiro	\$1.75
Till Potatoes Grow On Trees	Emma Brock	\$1.75
The Camp On Wildcat Creek (boys, ages 11-16)	V. Pandolph	
California Pagaent (Growth of Calif., ages 12-16)	P. Cleland	\$2.50
Footloose Fiddler	P. Cooper & H. Viller	\$2.75
And There Was America (ages 6-10)	P. Duvoisin	\$2.00
Made In America (handicrafts..ages 10-14)		\$2.00
The Birth Of A Nation's Song	U. L. Bakeless	\$1.50
Around America With The Indian	Jagendorf & Lampkin	\$1.50
Stephen Foster And His Little Dog Tray	Opal Wheeler	\$2.00
One String Fiddle	E. Berry & Webster	\$1.50
The Tinsmaker Of New Amsterdam	E. Berry & Sprackling	\$1.50
Old Songs And Singing Games	E. Chase	\$.75
Treasure Bag Of Game Songs	D. Gordon	\$1.50
The Songs We Sing	Van Loon & Castagnetta	\$1.25
Sing For America	Opal Wheeler	
America Sings	C. Carner	\$3.00
Plantation Songs (easy piano)	B. K. Thomas	\$.75
Koos The Hottentot	Josef Merais	\$2.50
Story Of The Southern Highlands	May McMeier	\$1.50

General

A Nation Of Nations	Louis Adamic	\$3.50
Let Me Show You Vermont	C. E. Crane	\$3.50
Prairie City	Angie Debo	\$3.00
Our Southwest	E. Fergusson	\$3.50
Call It North Country (Michigan)	J. B. Martin	\$3.50
Tall Tales Of The Southwest	E. J. Meine	\$1.50
Lanterns On The Levee	W.A. Percy	\$3.00
Early Americana	C. Richter	\$2.50
A Free Man	C. Richter	\$1.75
The Sea Of Grass	C. Richter	\$1.50
Tacey Cromwell	C. Richter	\$1.50
The Trees	C. Richter	\$2.50
Westward The Women	M. W. Ross	.75
Connecticut - Past and Present	O. Shepard	\$3.50
The Dwelling Place	A.G. Winslow	\$2.50
Rivers of America	Julia Davis	\$2.50
Stephen Foster, America's Troubadour	J.T. Howard	\$3.50
Percy Aldridge Grainger	D.C. Parker	\$.35
Father of the Blues	W.C. Handy	\$3.00
Stephen Foster's Family	E. Foster Morneweck	\$5.00
Album of American History	J.T. Adams	\$7.50
Folk Song in America	B. Botkin	\$3.50
A Treasury of American Folklore	B. Botkin	\$3.50
Lay My Burden Down	B. Botkin	\$3.50
Songs of American Sailormen	J.C. Colcord	\$4.50
Slave Songs of the Georgia Seacoast	Lydia Parrish	\$3.50
Songs of Rivers of America	Carl Carner	
Ballads and Songs of the Shanty Boy	F. Rickaby	
Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland	E.B. Greenleaf and G.Y. Mansfield	
Folk Hymns of America	A. Buchanan	\$1.25
Down East Spirituals	G.P. Jackson	\$4.50
White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands	G.P. Jackson	\$4.50
Folk Songs of the South	J.H. Cox	\$5.00
Spiritual Folk Songs of Early America	G.P. Jackson	\$5.50

(CHRISTMAS GIFTS)

A Songcatcher In Southern Mountains	Dorothy Scarborough	\$4.50
On The Trail Of Negro Folk Songs	Dorothy Scarborough	\$3.50
The Books Of American Negro Spirituals	J. W. & J. R. Johnson	\$3.50
The New Green Mountain Songster	Flanders, Ballard, Brown, Barry	\$3.50
Ballads And Songs Of Southern Michigan	Chickering & Gardner	\$5.00
Ballads And Songs From Ohio	M. O. Eddy	\$5.50
Sing A Song Of Americans	R. & S. Benet	\$.79 or 2.25
Traditional Music Of America	I. W. Ford	\$5.00
American Ballads And Folk Songs	J. & A. Lomax	\$5.00
Our Singing Country	J. & A. Lomax	\$5.00
Cowboy Songs And Other Frontier Ballads	J. & A. Lomax	\$3.75
Singing Cowboy	M. Larkin	\$3.75
Songs, Ballads Of Maine Lumberjacks	R. P. Gray	\$5.00
Minstrels Of The Mine Patch	G. Korson	\$3.00
Coal Dust On The Fiddle	G. Korson	\$3.50
Music And Dance In Calif.	Podriquez & Perlman	\$5.00
Songs Of American Folks	Coleman & Bregman	\$2.25
Traditional Ballads Of Virginia	A. K. Davis, Jr.	\$7.50
Chanteys And Ballads	H. Kemp	\$1.00
Hill Country Tunes (fiddle tunes of Pa.)	S. P. Bayard	\$3.00
Dances And Stories Of The American	E. S. Mason	\$5.00
The American Songbag	Carl Sandburg	\$2.69
A Treasury Of American Song	Downes & Siegmester	\$5.00
Folk Songs Of Old New England	E. H. Linscott	\$5.00
Afro-American Folk Songs	H. F. Krehbill	\$2.00
Folk Dancing And Singing Games	E. Burchenal	\$1.50
The Singing Caller	A. H. Chase	\$1.41
Good Morning	B. Lovett	\$.50
Swing Your Partners	D. Maddocks	\$1.00
Dances Of Our Pioneers	G. L. Ryan	\$2.00
World History Of The Dance	Curt Sachs	\$5.00
Cowboy Dances	L. Shaw	\$3.50
The Country Dance Book	Tolman & Page	\$2.00
The American Square Dance	M. Mayo	\$.50
Indian Games And Dances	A. C. Fletcher	\$2.00
The Phythm Of The Redman	J. W. Buttrees	\$2.50



ON THE RECORD

by
Phil Sheffler

Your Christmas or birthday shopping will be a simple matter if you are shopping for a person who owns a phonograph, for there is a wealth of available records in all the fields of music. We shall deal here, of course, only with the folk aspects of records, and the only thing we regret is that there are so few albums of square dancing on the market at present. But whether you wish to give presents or treat yourself to some new albums, you can be sure that records are always appreciated and enjoyed by all.

To further ease the situation of hunting and picking, a few albums will be reviewed here. Happy listenin'.

WAYFARING STRANGER. Burl Ives

Burl does a great job singing such songs as BLUE TAILED FLY, and THE SOW TOOK THE WEASLES. His care free style has made him one of the most popular singers in the folk field.

Asch #345 \$2.89

NEGRO SINFUL SONGS Leadbelly

Leadbelly sings, shouts, talks his way through 8 great records. Need we say more?

Musicraft #31 \$4.46

THE AMERICAN SONGBAG Sandburg

Carl Sandburg has endeared himself to millions of Americans, not only through his magnificent writing, but also by his singing of our folk songs. For the past twenty years or more, he has traveled throughout the land, singing the songs in a deep homey voice that shows his love of them. In this album he sings, among others, THE GALLOP SONG (Sam Hall) and FOGGY DAY.

Musicraft #11 \$3.75

FOR THE RECORD LIST

<u>Title</u>	<u>Album Number</u>	<u>Price</u>
FOLKSAY	Asch #432	\$3.50
Woodie Guthrie, Josh White, Leadbelly, Pete Seeger, and Sonny Terry		
BLUES	Asch #550	\$5.00
Nora Lee, Mary Lou Williams, Jack Dupree, Woodie, and Sonny		
SONGS BY LEADBELLY	Asch #343	\$2.75
Leadbelly, his guitar, and Sonny Terry		
BURL IVES, THE WAYFARING STRANGER	Asch #345	-
JOSH WHITE	Asch #348	\$2.75
songs as only Josh can sing; story by Langston Hughes		
COUNTRY DANCES	Asch #334	\$2.75
calls by Tiny Clark, music by the Sillers, descriptive booklet		
THE OLD CHISHOLM TRAIL	Keynote #K-104	\$2.75
Tony Kraber singing his rollicking cowboy songs		
RICHARD DYER-BENNETT	Keynote #K-108	\$2.75
particularly interesting lute accompaniments, very lovely songs		
EARLY AMERICAN BALLADS.	Keynote #K-102	\$2.75
John and Lucy Allison in a second album of early songs		

NOTES OF INTEREST

by Pat Diska

Encouraged by the increasing popularity of the group and of square dancing in general, the ASDG is again organizing a separate senior division whose members will be available for teaching and demon-



strations in the metropolitan area. Membership will not be restricted to the demonstration group, but will be open to every one over high-school age willing to attend

meetings every Sunday night....

Sincere thanks are due to the many outstanding folk artists who pitched in at the ASDG's Thanksgiving party to make a really unusual concert of folk music for friends and members of the group. Singers included Andrew Rowan Summers, Josef Marais, John and Lucy Allison, Tom Glazer, Adolph Bregman, Oscar Brand, and Pete Seeger.

...That folk material has really caught on in this sophisticated city was convincingly demonstrated by Burl Ives in his midnight concert at Town Hall Dec. 1. Undismayed by the unconventional hour chosen for the recital, folk lore lovers fresh from Broadway shows and midtown night clubs bought out all standing room and crowded up onto the stage where extra seats had been put to take care of the overflow. Although the audience as a whole was highly enthusiastic we felt the concert suffered from lack of variety in presentation -- without the words it would have been impossible to tell whether Ives was singing a sea chanty or a sentimental love ballad....

Captain Alan Swartz (Uncle John Jacob, to the initiate) writes in Frisco, or Tokyo, or somewhere in the Pacific: "I often think of those evenings when we got togeth-

er (on Promenade) and did the impossible.... I don't think Dali could present so many assorted characters and items of equipment on a given scene -- and make as much sense -- or have as much fun... needless to say it's more than just any few words can say to see Promenade going again."...Sergeant Manny Wiener reports from Nebraska that his new baby "already has begun to move her legs and arms about with a very definite pattern, making like a square dancer." Manny and Charlotte don't expect to come home till February or March....

RS 1/C Bob Tunick has been using his shore leave in Frisco to do some square dancing. "Needless to say," he complains, "the calls are different from what I've been used to hearing in New York. My opinion is they've been tampered with." Larry Keller, an Air Force private stationed in Greensboro, N.C. has also been attending square dances, while sweating out going overseas. ...Latest additions to the group's "ruptured duck club" are Danny and Bob Simon and Walter Folkoff. They all showed up at the same Friday night meeting, thereby disrupting at least seven square sets and one piano player...

Richard Dyer Bennett, "the twentieth century minstrel," will give a recital at Town Hall Saturday evening, Dec. 29. English-born Mr Dyer-Bennett's repertoire runs from Elizabethan ballads to American folk songs and sea chanties to Australian bush songs....

Watch for the new books about square dancing by Margot Mayo.... also some new square dance recordings.

